DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 038 563 AA 000 548

AUTHOR	Harrison, Don K.; Brown, Dorothy R.
TITLE	Petention of the Hard-to-Employ. Perspectives on Training the Disadvantaged--The Hard-to-Employ. Personnel Services Review Series 2.
INSTITUTION	ERIC Clearinghouse on Counseling and Personnel Services, Ann Arbor, Mich.
SPONS AGENCY	Office of Education (DHEW), Washington, D.C. Bureau of Research.
BUREAU NO	BR-6-2487
PUB DATE	May 70
CONTRACT	OEC-3-6-002487-1579-(010)
NOTE	10p.
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF-$0.25 HC-$0.60
DESCRIPTORS	*Child Care Centers, Counseling, *Health Services, Interpersonal Competence, *Legal Aid Projects, Negro Employment, *Retention, *Vocational Counseling, Welfare Services, Work Attitudes

ABSTRACT

Although calculated by various statistical methods, retention (in this monograph) refers to the time that a former hard core member stays on the job. These rates may be tallied from the first day of pre-vocational training at a center, from the first day of a plant's vestibule training, or the first day of work at the job site. The hard core need special assistance to get a job and to keep it. Special problems such as lack of transportation, financial roadblocks, legal entanglements, ill-health, inadequate child care, and supervisory hostility may interfere with job retention. Specific details in each problem area along with practical solution possibilities, often community resources, constitute the body of this report. The special assistance or support for the new employee may come from divergent sources such as, the highly-trained clinical psychologist, to the buddy system that utilizes a fellow employee with a comparable background to that of the new employee. (DB)

ED 038 563

COUNSELING & PERSONNEL SERVICES INFORMATION CENTER

PERSONNEL SERVICES REVIEW

SERIES 2

Perspectives on Training the Disadvantaged—

The Hard-to-Employ

RETENTION OF THE HARD-TO-EMPLOY

AA000 548

This paper was prepared pursuant to a contract with the Office of Education, U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. Contractors undertaking such projects under government sponsorship are encouraged to express freely their judgment in professional and technical matters. Points of view or opinions do not, therefore, necessarily represent official Office of Education position or policy.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION
& WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION
THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL OFFICE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY.

PERSONNEL SERVICES REVIEW

Series 2
Perspectives on Training the Disadvantaged —
The Hard-to-Employ

Retention of the Hard-to-Employ

Don K. Harrison
Dorothy R. Brown

May 1970

ERIC Counseling and Personnel Services Information Center
The University of Michigan
611 Church Street
Ann Arbor, Michigan

FORWARD

The Personnel Services Review is an ongoing publication series which has been developed by CAPS to inform personnel workers about new developments in a number of personnel services areas. There will be several different series of the Personnel Services Review. Each series will focus on a broad area of personnel work practice. Within each series there will be a number of specific issues (varying from five to ten depending on the series). Each of these issues will concentrate on a specific practice, procedure or method. The goal of these publications is to enable the reader to: (1) become aware of a practice, procedure or method; (2) learn about the ways in which this practice has been applied by others; (3) understand the underlying theory behind the practice; (4) consider possible applications of the practice in a variety of settings; and (5) consider ways that the practice might be implemented in his own personnel work program.

This particular Personnel Services Review series is entitled, "Perspectives on Training the Disadvantaged—The 'Hard-to-Employ'". Each issue will focus on an activity which has direct relevance for hiring, training, and retaining new workers from a disadvantaged background. The series is intended for use by personnel specialists and training staff in industry and business who wish to learn more about the development of their industrial work force. This series may also be of interest to vocational educators, employment counselors and specialists in the field of vocational education.

RETENTION OF THE HARD-TO-EMPLOY

RELEVANCE TO YOU?

Did you know that giving the unemployed a job may not be enough?

Are you aware of some of the problems which might interfere with the regular attendance of new employees?

Do you know some of the strategies being used to assist new employees to become adjusted to work and to report to the job on time?

DEFINITION OF RETENTION

In an over simplified definition, retention means keeping an individual in employment. The problem of employee turnover has been an important concern of employers for many years. Additional interest and concern has been brought to bear on this problem in view of private and public efforts to prepare increased numbers of persons from disadvantaged backgrounds to enter the labor market.

Retention, when used in reference to the urban unemployed, has not always had the same meaning for everyone; it is calculated statistically in different ways. Some companies do not count the time the trainee employee spends in pre-vocational training. They start to calculate their data at the time the employee enters the actual job situation. Retention rates are based on those workers who complete the training process and report to the actual work environment, while the drop-out during training is ignored. One private training company computes retention rates beginning with the day the individual is hired, even though he will spend several weeks in pre-vocational training before he reports to work. But the statistics do not reflect the real problem--how the employer can prevent the employee drop-out problem.

APPROACHES AND CONSIDERATIONS FOR IMPROVED RETENTION

Any approach which deals with encouraging workers to stay on the job has to also deal with the prevention of behavior which may lead to firing. In other words, the approach should be directed toward the prevention of problems, or the reduction and elimination of difficulties which new employees encounter.

Some of the barriers which make it difficult to keep a job are: transportation; financial problems; legal entanglements; chronic illness in the family; and differences in life style. This is but a sampling, not a complete list. Conceivably, a hard-core employee might have problems in all of these areas since there is much dovetailing of problems; it is also conceivable that he may have none of these difficulties. With this in mind, this issue of the

series discusses some key problem areas for the disadvantaged which it is possible to anticipate and counteract. For the disadvantaged, the first step is to get a job. Step Two is to keep it, and this is where the company may need to provide special assistance. The special assistance may be called counseling, job-coaching, supportive service, etc. In any guise, it means that the company is making special efforts to keep its new employee on the job. The helping personnel may be highly trained—e.g., the group counselor may be a clinical psychologist, or untrained—e.g., a buddy system involving a fellow employee with a comparable background to that of the new employee. Whatever method is used, high support seemed to contribute to job retention. A study of ten participating companies providing high support and ten providing little support showed that the former retained 82 percent of the clients while the latter retained only 28 percent of the clients employed. (Jobs Now, page 1).

The following sections examine the problems in retention of the hard-to-employ and present some possible solutions.

A. Transportation Problems

The lack of transportation ranks high as a cause for absenteeism and tardiness. Companies often conduct their major operations outside of the central city. Many new employees do not have cars or the money to buy and operate them. Speaking of hard-core employees, one training coordinator said, "No one has a good car here. When a man gets a job with us, he finds he can get $250 credit, so he goes to a used car lot and somebody unloads a pile of junk on him. He starts driving to work and about the third day the car gives out and he's late. When a pool car gives out, three or four are late." (American Machinist, page 130). Their friends and relatives may not have cars so they cannot borrow. They may not even have a driver's license. Public transportation often stops at the city limits and does not continue into the outlying suburbs where the plant is located. Even if there should be public transportation from the inner city to the suburbs, the schedules may be erratic and useless. Chrysler, for example, found that one new employee was tardy because he was walking four miles to work.

Practical Solutions

1. The new employee may not be able to find his way, or he may not know how long it takes to reach his destination. The JOBS NOW project of the Chicago YMCA assists the hard core unemployed with a detailed two-week study of the transportation system in Chicago. They spend the first week with projects in the classroom that involve map-reading, public transportation routes, etc. On Monday of the second week, the trainees are given money for transportation, draw a destination out of a hat, travel to the destination, collect something to show they have been there, and return within a prescribed length of time. The switchboard operator knows where each student is bound, and he can call if he should become lost.

2. Many new employees are so destitute and heavily in debt, that transportation allowance from the company may be necessary. This allowance may help him until he receives two or three pay checks and has a small amount of financial stability.

3. When public transportation ends at the city limits, a company may provide transportation from the end of the bus line to the plant, and back to the bus line at the end of the work shift.

4. A special bus service may be established. For instance, the United Brotherhood, a community group in Detroit, organized a bus service, set up a contract with employers and employees, and transported employees from the inner city to a distant plant.

5. Driver's training is sometimes provided by training companies, like Northern Systems in Detroit, but the trainee may find the only car he can afford is an undependable, old wreck.

B. A Financial Roadblock—Garnishment

Since Jimmy has not had steady work for two years, he owes his soul to the local loan shark. After working for two weeks, he is afraid and anxious of the same old cycle of financial harassment. He takes off without giving notice to his employer and moves his family during the night.

Since some companies have a policy of firing employees who are garnished, he is not waiting for his creditors to find him. Since anyone who has been unemployed is likely to face financial shortages, companies might review past policy in this regard.

Practical Solutions

1. Company recognition of this problem and an offer of assistance through a special payroll deduction plan may add a dimension of trust and loyalty from the new employee to the company.

2. In the follow-up, the company may find their employee is in desperate need of money management counseling. JOBS NOW offers a detailed program in family budget control, checking and savings account procedures, the use and misuse of consumer credit, etc. In the follow-up, the company may also find the employee is being illegally harassed and intimidated.

C. Legal Entanglements

Traditionally, the privileges of the law have not been as available to the minorities and the poor as they have to middle-class white Americans. Because they are unaware of their rights under the law, it has been easier to enter their homes without a search warrant and arrest them. Juveniles are often totally deprived of their constitutional guarantees.

Practical Solutions

1. Poor people who need legal services often find the Legal Aid Society helpful, but some may not know about it. They may also need support to realize that the solution to their problem may not be easy.

2. The company may find that intercession with the police can assist an employee out of a minor scrape.

3. One company provided legal service at court every Monday morning to facilitate bail, legal assistance, and probation for its employees.

4. Some university law schools provide low-fee lawyers and student-lawyers for the disadvantaged.

5. One VISTA program, the Neighborhood Health Center of Montefiore Hospital, New York City, has five lawyers attached to the Center. They take legal action for health-related rights or to remedy grievances, and lecture community groups about their rights as consumers and tenants.

D. Health and Child Care

Most companies require a physical examination for all future employees. Since the disadvantaged may have had little or no medical attention, it may be necessary to "screen in" potential employees with minor disabilities. Infant mortality rate is a good indicator of community health; statistics show the death rate is twice as high for non-whites as for whites. In Detroit, the Mayor's Youth Employment Program reported that 84.6 percent of their trainees needed medical help. They also gave classes in diet and nutrition. Fifty percent of hard core medical problems can be traced to inadequate diet.

Some cases of poor work performance have been remedied by providing properly fitted eyeglasses or hearing aids for the employee. Sometimes tooth extraction may solve a work-loss problem. Illness of wife and children may keep the new worker at home. Employees need to be told about community medical services and also about the company-sponsored medical plan.

Care and health of children may divert the energy of the new employee, especially if the woman of the family is working. Working women may require help in arranging for baby-sitting services for young children. When a woman employee is head of her family, child care is likely to be her primary problem.

Practical Solutions

1. Some companies provide day care centers for young children of their women employees.

2. Sometimes community day care centers are available.

3. For women in JOBS (Job Opportunities Through Better Skills) loans are available to pay for baby sitters.

E. Supervisory Acceptance

If this new work force is to remain motivated, foremen should acquire an understanding of the men they will supervise. Supervisory training will be of use in helping supervisors to understand the language, kind of dress, and life style of new employees. The foremen should not confuse a different life style with inadequacy or inability to produce. To communicate, supervisor and employee need to have mutual understanding and respect for each other.

White minorities in this country have not had the same desperate history as non-whites. It is possible to present histories of non-white minority groups through guest speakers, slides, etc. A book, The Souls of Black Folk, by W.E.B. DuBois will give a personal viewpoint of Negro history especially from 1865 to 1910.

A film, In the Company of Men, probes the encounters between white foremen and black hard-core workers during sensitivity sessions at a Southern auto plant. Manchild in the Promised Land, a novel available in paperback, gives tremendous insight into language, life style, and troubles of a black adolescent in New York City. When the Legends Die, also available in paperback editions, allows you to live an agonizing existence as a modern Indian adolescent whose job is that of bronc-buster. There is a vast reservoir of materials that will help the supervisor understand social and personal circumstances that have shaped the disadvantaged's personal and work habits.

GENERALIZATIONS

1. The employment of an individual from a disadvantaged background who has been unemployed for a long time may generate the need for special assistance with certain problems which will affect his remaining on the job.

2. Some of the problems interfering with job retention may be in the following areas: lack of transportation; personal finances; legal entanglements; medical need; inadequate arrangement for child care; and supervisory non-acceptance of the life style of the new employee.

3. Supervisory training (sensitivity training) has been used with good results by some firms and it is recommended for all supervisors who will be working directly with the new employee. Supervisory training should be designed to increase understanding of some of the needs of the new employee out of which may develop more effective methods of supervision.

ACTION POSSIBILITIES

1. An inventory of the reasons why employees quit or were fired will help define the problem areas.

2. Practical solutions may be found among those suggested in this paper, and used effectively by other firms.

3. The company staff must be aware of the needs of workers from disadvantaged backgrounds, experienced in working with them, and knowledgable of community resources.

4. Contact community organizations, e.g., the Legal Aid Society, Family Services, the Urban League, etc., to determine the kind of assistance available to your employees.

5. Arrange for your supervisors to participate in a supervisory training program where the objectives include increased understanding of the new employee from a disadvantaged background.

IMPLEMENTATION

1. The in-company availability of staff will help determine the extent to which measures can be taken by the company to provide employee services which may have the beneficial effect of reducing turnover.

2. Where company personnel is limited or lacking in expertise, consideration should be given to hiring personnel with the competencies required to furnish supportive services to new employees.

3. Where there are limitations of staff time and inadequate funds to hire new personnel, funds to hire new personnel, funding for the hiring, training and retention of the hard-to-employ may be available from the National Alliance of Businessmen and the U.S. Department of Labor.

4. The Regional and Local National Alliance of Businessmen is available to furnish consultation in implementing a program which may lead to improvements in retention of the group of employees who make up the larger industrial work force.

References

American Society for Training and Development: Greater Detroit Chapter, Visit to Chrysler's Hardcore Training Center in Warren, Michigan, October 22, 1969.

Banta, T. JOB-ORIENTED EDUCATION PROGRAMS FOR THE DISADVANTAGED. Knoxville: University of Tennessee, 1969.

Ferman, L. DISADVANTAGED YOUTH: PROBLEMS OF JOB PLACEMENT, JOB CREATION AND JOB DEVELOPMENT. Ann Arbor: Institute of Labor and Industrial Relations, 1969.

Gordon, J.E. TESTING, COUNSELING AND SUPPORTIVE SERVICES FOR DISADVANTAGED YOUTH. EXPERIENCES OF MDTA EXPERIMENTAL AND DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS FOR DISADVANTAGED YOUTH. Ann Arbor: Institute of Labor and Industrial Relations, 1969.

IN THE PROVINCE GHETTO. Vista Volunteer, 1969, 5, p18-23.

J.O.B.S. N.O.W. A PROJECT TO FIND EMPLOYMENT FOR 3,000 YOUNG MEN AND WOMEN, PROVIDE A UNIFIED APPROACH TO EMPLOYMENT OF THE DISADVANTAGED AND TO OPERATE A SEMINAR CENTER FOR PERSONNEL INVOLVED IN THE RECRUITING, TRAINING, AND EMPLOYMENT. Chicago YMCA, 1967.

Levitan, S.A. ANTI-POVERTY WORK AND TRAINING EFFORTS: GOALS AND REALITY. POLICY PAPERS IN HUMAN RESOURCES AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS, NO. 3, 1967.

National Association of Manufacturers. EFFECTIVELY EMPLOYING THE HARD-CORE. 1968.

U.S. Department of Labor. MANPOWER REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT. Washington: 1966.

WHERE DO YOU FIND HIM? HOW DO YOU FIT HIM FOR A JOB? American Machinist, June 3, 1968.

ORDERING INSTRUCTIONS - ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS)

To order any of the documents listed in this paper which have either a CG number or an ED number, the following information must be furnished:

The ED or CG number of the desired document
The type of reproduction desired - hard (photo) copy (HC), or microfiche (MF)
The number of copies being ordered

Payments must accompany orders totaling less than five dollars. Add handling charge of 50 cents for each order. Residents of states which have sales tax laws must include payment of the appropriate tax or include a tax exempt certificate.

Send order to:

ERIC Document Reproduction Service
The National Cash Register Company
4936 Fairmont Avenue
Bethesda, Maryland 20014